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Jews in the Confederacy: Newspaper Articles

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Jews in the Confederacy

CHARLESTON MERCURY, June 27, 1861, p. 3, c. 4

Hebrew Patriotism.--The fair daughters of Judah are nobly represented in Charlotte, N. C., as may be seen in the following communication:

To the Intendant and Commissioners of the Town of Charlotte--Gentlemen: enclosed find the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars from the Jewish ladies, residents of this town, to be appropriated for the benefit of the families of our brave volunteers now fighting in defence [sic] of our home and liberty. With our prayers to Almighty God for their safety, and that he will bless our glorious cause with victory and success,

We remain yours respectfully,
The Jewish Ladies of Charlotte.

SOUTHERN WATCHMAN [ATHENS, GA], April 30, 1862, p. 2, c. 4

Savannah, Ga., April 26th, 1862.

John H. Christy, Esq.--It has been a long time since I penned a sentence for the Watchman, with the readers of which I used to hold voluminous converse on various subjects of public policy, over the signature of "Samuel" and other cognomens. ... I have been in the army, stationed at, and near this city, for the defence [sic] of Savannah and the coast, near four months. I sought, and have attained, the position I desired--that of a high private in the ranks of the Soldier. . . . In view of the possibility of an occupation of the city by Lincoln's forces, many families have left, and sought shelter in the interior towns and villages, and in the country. The streets everywhere present a denuded appearance, so far as population is concerned, and business of every description presents the same lifeless, unhealthy aspect. The business of measuring tape, the dry goods part, is in the hands, and conducted principally, by cadaverous looking, cushion-footed Jews, that infest and have cursed every hamlet, village, town, and city in the land. They utterly refuse to shoulder their muskets and fight in defence [sic] of the invaded South; and as to making donations to our various hospitals, or furnishing our soldiers, or their suffering wives and children, with needful supplies, without two prices for every article, they are as clear of it as a dog of a soul. It is characteristic of a Jew to be engaged in the clothing trade, always having old "garments" on their shelves for sale. ... Bacon commands from 40 to 60 cents; meal \$2.25 and \$2.50; flour \$12 and \$15; chickens 75 cents; eggs 60 cents; pork 25 and mutton 20 cents, etc., etc.; all kinds of vegetables, of which there seems to be great abundance on the market, maintaining correspondingly high figures. . . . W. A. Lewis.

MEMPHIS DAILY APPEAL [GRENADA, MS], August 14, 1862, p. 1, c. 8

A Noble Example.--E. McGehee, proprietor of the Woodville Factory, we are informed, has been and is still furnishing the quartermaster's department, for the use of the army, with a good article of Lowels [sic] at twenty-five cents a yard, and linseys at seventy-five cents a yard. He refuses the current and exorbitant prices demanded by the haberdashers, hucksters and Jew extortioners, and sells to the government to clothe its brave and sometimes almost naked heroes at one-half the market price. What a noble example of disinterested and lofty patriotism!--Mississippian.

ATLANTA SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY, August 27, 1862, p. 2, c. 1-2

From our Special Correspondent "T.D.W.,"

Morristown, Tenn., Aug. 23, 1862.

Dear Confederacy:

A jaunt upon a railroad is sometimes a delightful thing, especially when one is going home--the thoughts of the dear ones there, the friends we meet, and the clustering together of the many associations that makes home delightful. These, together with many other pleasing recollections connected with Atlanta, came over me as I bobbed up and down on the cars between here and the Gate City. What would Atlanta look like? . . .

I strolled up the streets, and there was the same hurly burly confusion of business-men as heretofore. Everybody wanted money--everybody made money. The Jew and the Gentile were found whispering together for a bargain. The milliner declared that "this cannot be bought elsewhere for less than such a price." The auctioneer from the stand was astonished as usual that his crowd would not bid more for this article, as the stores would charge double what they were bidding. Brokers had gold and bills scattered profusely upon their counters, ready to give you as clean a shave as any one of the many barbers that line the principal streets. The poor seamstresses, pale with excessive application, bending over their work to a late hour, passed by me in great numbers. No doubt they often think of the promises made to take care of them while father, husband or son went to the war. Even the industrious newsboy would harass you as usual with his cry of "Here's your Confederacy!" or "Here's your Intelligencer!" . . .

SAVANNAH REPUBLICAN, September 15, 1862, p. 2, c. 2

Meeting of German Jews.

Savannah, Sept. 13th, 1862.

At a meeting of the German Jews of this city, held this evening, Mr. M. Loewenthal was called to the Chair, and Mr. A. L. Crabfelder requested to act as Secretary.

The Chairman stated the object of the meeting, when on motion of Mr. Joseph Rosenthal, a Committee of five were appointed to draft suitable resolutions for the consideration of the meeting. The Committee consisted of Messrs. J. Rosenthal, S. Gardner, M. Selig, H. Meinhard and M. Brown.

The Committee retired, and returning, reported the following preamble and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, we have read with amazement and contempt the proceedings of a meeting at Thomasville, held on the 30th August last, in which German Jews are denounced in unmeasured terms—are prohibited from visiting that village, and banishing all those now resident in that place.

This wholesale slander, persecution and denunciation of a people, many of whom are pouring out their blood on the battlefields of their country, in defence [sic] of civil and religious liberty, is at war with the spirit of the age—the letter of the constitution—and the principles of religion—and can find no parallel except in the barbarities of the inquisition and the persecution of the dark ages. We feel that we have no remedy but in an appeal to an enlightened public opinion, and to that we do appeal.

Be it therefore resolved, That whilst we do not indiscriminately eulogise [sic] our people, yet we boldly aver that as a class, they are as honest, as true and as faithful as their persecutors and slanderers, and to this end refer to the criminal courts of the country.

Resolved, That we hold all concerned in that meeting, as enemies of human liberty and freedom of conscience.

Resolved, That all newspapers giving currency to this slander and intolerance, are participating in the foul wrong, and we recommend every Jew to withhold from the same his patronage and support.

Resolved, That the Savannah Republican, and all other papers which support civil and religious liberty and are opposed to persecution, be requested to publish the above.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

M. Loewenthal, Chairman.

A. L. Grabfedler, Sec'ry.

CHARLESTON MERCURY, October 8, 1862, p. 2, c. 1

The Jewish citizens of Wilmington, now in Fayetteville, have raised \$1,100 for the relief of their suffering city.

SAVANNAH REPUBLICAN, October 9, 1862, p. 1, c. 4

The Jewish citizens of Wilmington, now in Fayetteville, have raised \$1,100 for the relief of their suffering city.

MEMPHIS DAILY APPEAL [JACKSON, MS], December 30, 1862, p. 1, c. 3

Interesting Captured Federal Correspondence.

Among the spoils taken in the late surprise of the Federals at Holly Springs, were the following series of letters, written by the correspondent of the Indianapolis (Ind.) Sentinel, for the transmission of which to their intended destination he was probably awaiting an opportunity.

..

Holly Springs, December 18, 1862.

There are green spots even in the life of an army follower occasionally. These are not when he has to travel all day without dinner or supper, up to 10 o'clock at night, as most of my travelling companions did yesterday, including sundry women and children, and as would have been my case but for the prudent forethought of a female friend of mine to whom I had often been indebted for similar favors. I only regretted that I had not enough to make everybody as comfortable as his lunch made me. But the prospect of arriving at the end of the road, at the hour of ten, of a very cold night, the town a half a mile from the depot, and the hotels all more than full already, and twenty cotton buying Jews seeking quarters, and the hotels, poor things at best, was anything but a green spot. . . . T.A.B.

CHARLESTON MERCURY, January 9, 1863, p. 1, c. 4-5.

The Jews and the War.

To the Editor of the Richmond Examiner: Among the prevailing fashions, none perhaps has grasped the public mind, with a firmer hold, and none withal is fraught at times with more cruel injustice than that of seeking in a particular individual or a separate class scapegoats for the general disappointment at failures or indignation at crimes. For the occasional blunders of our finance or disasters of our arms the officers of the government punish the ready and oftentimes the appropriate victims, and I esteem it among the attractions of our political system that it provides ex officio shoulders for the bearing of these public burdens. But the practice now generally obtaining of ascribing the faults of a whole community to a particular class or the kindred error of condemning a race for the criminal conduct of individuals is so unjust,

ungenerous and unfair, that it behooves those who see its injustice to cry out in earnest protest against it, though all Babeldom should clamour [sic] in consequence.

Conspicuous among the examples of this conduct is the indiscriminate and perpetual assault upon our fellow citizens of the Hebrew faith.

Of that remarkable race which has survived a tragedy of forty centuries, preserving through an ordeal of exile persecution and torture, that makes the heart curdle with horror, its creed, its prejudices and its blood, which has stood by the cradle and the grave of so many mighty empires, itself the spoil and sport of them all, and which, to-day, without a home, a nation or a name, a temple, a sacrifice or a priesthood chants the triumphant paeon of Miriom or the sublime dirge of Job, or the magnificent prophecies of Isaiah in every civilized land under Heaven--a race which amid the scoffs, the insults and oppressions of private sentiment and public law has even in our day asserted its claim to the brotherhood of genius by giving a Mayerbeer to Music, to Finance the Rothschilds, to Literature and Politics the D'Israelis, to Painting David, to the Drama the immortal Rachel. Of this race I do not blush to be the apologist, but their true defence [sic] is the record of their life and character. True, you will find them thronging your marts, devoting their acuteness of mind and activity of energies with untiring zeal to the accumulation of wealth, mortally offending therein many whom they distance in the race of industry, economy and address; but there are places where you will not find them. Go to your almshouses, your workhouses, your jails, your criminal docks, your penitentiaries, your houses of correction, your tippling houses, your worse-houses, and you may search long and search fruitlessly for the marked features of the scattered children of Israel. What, then, are the crimes which debar a people so orderly and so thrifty from the boon of simple justice in the criticism of the street and the press?

It is asserted that they have not furnished their quota of men for the public defence [sic]. To the extent that this charge is well founded, and it is not true to the extent that it applies to other classes of our people, it is attributable mainly to two causes. In the first place, our Jewish fellow-citizens rarely mix in politics, either in its toils or its gains. They are noted wherever they live for the readiness with which they accept any Government, and their indisposition to take part either in its conduct or overthrow. But the main reason is their avocation. Trade (and the Jews are all tradesmen) is proverbially conservative, peaceful, timid. The fighting of the world in all battles for freedom has been done by the farmers and the gentry, the artizan [sic] and the professional man. Moreover, to the considerations which impel all men to avoid the perils of war, there is added, in the case of the man of trade, the extraordinary inducement of the unexampled profits of which a time of civil disorder furnishes the occasion, the temptation and the means. Let us look around among our Gentile trade community, and ask ourselves if the same feverish anxiety to obtain an exemption, or "put in a substitute," is not the prevailing character of all? And which conduct is more reprehensible, that of the Jews, who have remained in their old channels of business, enlarging and extending them, or that of those Gentiles who, from every profession and pursuit, from that of the clergyman to the seller of "truck," have rushed into the wildest speculations? When we add that many of the latter were among the most blatant of our secession friends, the Jews have still less reason to shrink from the comparison.

The main reason why the number of Jews out of the service seems so very disproportionate is the fact that so large a number of them are unnaturalized Germans, and while I do not propose to defend the policy which permits foreigners to feed upon the distresses of the country, I protest against the Jews being made the victim of especial blame until it can be shown that they are peculiar in claiming the privilege which public legislation accords them; above all

when we see the eagerness with which so many of the native born avail themselves of every shadow of excuse to avoid serving the land that gave them birth in the throws of immortal agony.

I have said the Jews were not as justly amenable to the charge of shirking the public defence [sic] as others. Will any one point out a class more wealthy, more honored, more influential, more keen to see the main chance in peace or war than the Scotch? And yet as far as I am aware there is not a Scotch regiment, battalion or even company in the Confederate service, to offset the splendid Scotch regiment which so stoutly upheld the banner of our foes on the first field of Manassas. Their victories are in the bloodless but profitable fields of speculation, and yet we hear no sweeping imputation of their loyalty or denunciation of their greed.

The other charge is that of "infamous extortion." If extortion means buying as cheaply as possibly and selling as dearly, I know one Gentile firm in Charleston that has profited more by extortion than all the Jews on Broad street, and I fancy that a woolen firm in Richmond or a certain flouring establishment or a certain foundry might run a similar race with considerable prospects of success. Those who make this charge and turn to the great cotton factories, to the iron factories, to the tanneries, to the commission houses, to the railroad companies, to the importers, to every conceivable branch of business; but especially to that vast storehouse of villainous corruption and vast profits in which, as in all I have named above, Christians enjoy an undivided monopoly of extortion, will have occasion to pause ere they assign to our Jewish fellow citizens the palm of superiority in that great trade vice which gnaws, like the Promethean vulture, at the vitals of the body politic. No, Mr. Editor, for bold, unblushing thievery the above mentioned establishments owned and managed by the longest faces and the broadest phylacteries at synod and conventicle, the most immaculate purists in patriotism and Puritans in faith, claim a proud precedence over the worst and wickedest extortion ever charged against the petty trader or the larger dealer who so excited the indignation of these worthies.

Dry goods are not, perhaps, the forte of these Christian gentlemen, and the

"Compound for sins they are inclined to,

By damning those they have no mind to."

When the crime of extortion ceases to stalk abroad with so satisfied a post in every thoroughfare of life; when the press ceases to content itself with those glittering generalities of criticism which satisfy the editorial conscience without affecting the subscription list; when pampered extortioners cease to flaunt their ill-gotten gains unchallenged in the face of the sanctuary; when dastard pulpit orators arm themselves with the thunders of the church, and launch its righteous wrath against his crying wickedness in high places; and when public opinion and the potent voice of the law cease to connive at, if they do not absolutely applaud, all this gaudy crime, timidly shrinking from a contest with the monster, or meanly admitting their impotence to subdue it--then, and not till then, will it become us to pluck the mote from the eye of our Jewish brother, or reproach him for his blindness.

If, finally, it be true that many of our Jewish fellow-citizens have accumulated fortunes in the progress of this unhappy war, it is no less true that among those who have given of their abundance with lavish hand to every enterprise having the benefit of the soldier for its object, a conspicuous place may be claimed for the men and women of that faith. I attest the reader's experience for corroboration of the statement, that in whatever tended to the army's weal, in camp or field, barrack or hospital, Jews have leant their aid with untiring energy and munificent generosity. They have been appointed committee men, and worked well; they have been approached for assistance, and have paid well--better in many instances that have come under

my own observation--far better than those who find employment for their malice or a cloak for their own crimes in vilifying them.

Such, Mr. Editor, are the candid sentiments of a volunteer, "who does not sign himself Moses," and is

NOT A JEW.

Petersburg, December 22, 1862.

CHARLESTON MERCURY, January 17, 1863, p. 1, c. 1

Mobile, Ala., January 10.

Mobile is a charming place, except in rainy weather, which invariably transforms the city into a kind of muddy Venice. . . On the 8th instant the Hebrew young ladies of this city gave a ball and supper, the proceeds to be given to the 32d Alabama Regiment, who have nobly distinguished themselves in Tennessee. The spacious hall (Temperance Hall) was crowded, and, your correspondent speaks for self, all enjoyed themselves to their heart's content. . . Leigh.

CHARLESTON MERCURY, January 27, 1863, p. 2, c. 1

The Israelites in the Army--There was a paragraph in one of the city papers the other day, to the effect that General Beauregard has said there were 40,000 Hebrews in the army, and hence, when applied to, had to decline the request made to him on one occasion, to permit them to be absent for a time from the army, in September, 1861. What General B. really said will be found in the letter herewith:

Headquarters, }
1st Corps Army of the Potomac, }
Manassas, September 1st, 1861. }

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 23d ult. has been received and duly considered by the General Commanding, who instructs me to reply as follows:

The advance brigades of the army are now bivouacked in full view of the Capitol of the late United States, and have daily small conflicts with our invading enemy; therefore, to grant your application to give furloughs to the soldiers of the Jewish persuasion from "the 2d to the 15th day of September, so that they may participate in the holy service" of your ancient religion for this period of the year, is impossible, as you and all Hebrews serving with this army will surely understand.

It would seem, indeed, the Ruler of nations and God of battles is guiding and aiding us, as certainly and visibly in these days as when, of old, He released your people from Egyptian bondage; and the General sincerely believes that all Israelites now in this army will do quite as acceptable service to Jehovah, at this momentous juncture, in standing here, at their posts, ready to battle for their homes, their liberties, and their country, as if their time were passed in the strictest observance and celebration of the sublime rites of Judaism for this period of the year.

Confidently trusting in this, and assured that on reflection such must be the conclusion of all of your religion,

I have the honor to be,

Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Thomas Jordan,

A. A. General.

To M. I. Mechelbacker, Rabbi Preacher.

WEEKLY COLUMBUS ENQUIRER, April 21, 1863, p. 1, c. 7

A very painful and disgraceful scene has occurred on the streets of Milledgeville. An immense crowd of women collected and helped themselves to dry goods in the stores of some Jewish merchants here—Gans & Co.—and were about to help themselves to cotton yarns at Waltzfelder's—who are connected with the factory. . . --Correspondence of Macon Telegraph.

GALVESTON WEEKLY NEWS, July 29, 1863, p. 1, c. 1

Brownsville, Texas, July 9th, 1863.

Galveston News:-- . . . We have had some good rains lately, giving hope of some grass, and refreshing the scorching winds. Instead of broiling, we are now occasionally boiling; but disease is disappearing, and trade is lively. This is a curious place just now. Such an assemblage of oxen, mules, asses, Jews, speculators, speculators, swindlers, rowdies, et ide omne genus, never was seen before. . .

Many abuse the Jews and traders for this hoarding of the specie; but if the truth were not so unpalatable, it might be whispered that the planters are not totally free from this sin (if sin it be) of hoarding their gold. . .

Observer.

MOBILE REGISTER AND ADVERTISER, September 27, 1863, p. 1, c. 3

Richmond, Sept. 21, 1863

. . . Juvenile offenders here become very common, and it is difficult to decide what to do with them. Saturday a party were arrested for creating a disturbance at the Jewish Synagogue.

GALVESTON WEEKLY NEWS, December 9, 1863, p. 1, c. 1

Old Cloths vs. Silks.—Our country women complain that the Jews are making fortunes from the sales of costly dry goods. If our fair friends will cease to patronize, instead of complain of the Jews, wear their old clothes, and give the money now spent in silks to thinly clad and badly shod soldiers, one source of speculation would soon dry up. Try it, gentle lady, and you will sleep sweeter at night, feeling that you deserve the protection of the brave men now perilling [sic] their lives to save you from future insult and degradation. Try it; and dry goods will fall to rational prices within six months.—Punch.

MEMPHIS DAILY APPEAL [ATLANTA, GA], February 6, 1864, p. 2, c. 6

A Womanly Appeal to the Ladies.

From the Columbus Enquirer.]

. . . Sisters of the South, we have work to do! Think not that by draping your forms in crapes and bombazines you are honoring your noble dead. Think not that by giving a Jewish extortioner a thousand dollars for a suit of deepest black, and a Jewish milliner a hundred or two more for putting it in wearing order, you show that they are still fresh in your memory. . .

AUSTIN [TX] STATE GAZETTE, May 11, 1864, p. 1, c. 2

Old Clothes vs. Silks.--Our country women complain that the jews are making fortunes from the sales of costly dry goods. If our fair friends will cease to patronize, instead of complain of the Jews, wear their old clothes, and give the money now spent for silks to thinly clad and badly shod soldiers, one source of speculation would soon dry up. Try it, gentle lady, and you will sleep sweeter at night, feeling that you deserve the protection of the brave men now periling their

lives to save you from future insult and degradation. Try it, and dry goods will fall to rational prices within six months.

DALLAS HERALD, October 21, 1865, p. 2, c. 1

Letter from Kaufman.

Kaufman, Texas

Oct. 5th, 1865

. . . As yet, but few goods, or any character of merchandise have found their way to our county, except perhaps now and then an occasional peddler of Jewish faith gives us a call. It is quite annoying to be thus still deprived of the privilege of buying your wife a new calico dress, and yourself a pair of boots. And then some of the ladies say, this home manufacture of goods is very irksome. . . .

HAL.